

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir

(The Enveloped One)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 56 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 56

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَتَبَايَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾ فَإِذَا نُقِرَ
فِي النَّافُورِ ﴿٨﴾ فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ
﴿١٠﴾ ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ، مَا لَا مَمْدُودًا ﴿١٢﴾
وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ ﴿١٥﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾ سَأَرْهُقَهُ صَعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ
﴿١٨﴾ فَقَتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ
عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ
﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَأَصْلِيهِ سَقَرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ
﴿٢٧﴾ لَا تُبْقَى وَلَا تَذَرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَوَاحٍ لِّلْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٩﴾ عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةُ عَشَرِ ﴿٣٠﴾
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً ۖ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمُ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا ۚ لَيَسْتَخْفِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا
يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ وَلَيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ

وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا ۖ كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي
 مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣١﴾
 كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّهَا
 لَإِحْدَى الْكُبَرِ ﴿٣٥﴾ نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَن يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ
 ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾ فِي
 جَنَّتٍ ۖ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ
 ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمَصْلِيِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نَطْعُمُ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿٤٤﴾
 وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّى
 آتَنَّا الْيَقِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ
 التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ كَانَهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ
 ﴿٥١﴾ بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُوتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُّنْشَرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾ كَلَّا ۖ بَلْ
 لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمَن شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا
 يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۖ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

O you, enveloped in a mantle, [1] stand up and warn, [2] and pronounce the greatness of your Lord, [3] and purify your clothes, [4] and keep away from filth, [5] and do no favour (to anyone merely) to ask more (in exchange), [6] and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience. [7] For when the trumpet is blown, [8] that day will be a difficult day, [9] not easy for the disbelievers. [10] Leave me (to deal) with the one whom I have created lonely, [11] and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes, [13] and extended (power and honour) to him fairly well. [14] Still, he aspires that I should give him more. [15] Never! He is inimical towards Our verses. [16] I will force him to climb (the mountain) sa'ud. [17] He pondered and suggested. [18] Death unto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked (to those around him,) [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is

nothing but saying of a mortal." [25] I will put him into Saqar (Hell). [26] And what can let you know what Saqar is? [27] It neither spares (anything inside it from burning) nor leaves (any disbeliever outside). [28] It will disfigure the skins. [29] Appointed on it are nineteen (wardens). [30] And We did not make wardens of the Fire but (from among) angels, and did not fix their number but as a test for those who disbelieve, so that those who are given the Book may come to believe, and those who believe may increase in belief, and so that those who are given the Book and those who believe may not doubt (its correctness), and so that those having malady in their hearts and the disbelievers say, "What has Allah meant by this (sentence that is as strange as a) proverb?" Thus Allah lets go astray whomever He wills, and leads to the right path whomever He wills. And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else but a reminder for mankind. [31] Truly, I swear by the moon, [32] and by the night when it goes back, [33] and by the morning when it becomes bright, [34] it (*saqar*: Hell) is one of the greatest things [35] as a warning to the mankind, [36] to the one who wishes to come forward (towards good deeds) or to go back (from them). [37] Everyone will be detained (in the Hell) because of what he did, [38] except the People of the Right, (i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands) [39] who will be in gardens, asking [40] about the guilty persons, [41] "What has brought you to? (*Saqar*: Hell)" [42] They will say, "We were not among those who offered *ṣalāh*, (obligatory prayer) [43] and we used not to give food to the needy, [44] and we used to indulge (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged, [45] and used to deny the Day of Requit, [46] until when we were overtaken by that which is certain." [47] Then intercession of intercessors will not avail them. [48] So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder, [49] as if they were wild donkeys, [50] fleeing from a lion? [51] Rather, every one of them wishes that he should be given unrolled (divine) scriptures. [52] Never! But they do not fear the Hereafter. [53] Never! Indeed, this is a Reminder. [54] So, whoever so wishes may take advice from it. [55] And they will not take advice unless Allah so wills. He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive. [56]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Muddththir is one of the Sūrahs that was sent down in very early days of the revelation. Therefore, some of the scholars considered this Sūrah to be the first one in order of revelation. However, according to the well-known authentic *aḥādīth*, the first instalment of revelation

comprised the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra'. Traditions show that after a few verses of this Sūrah had been revealed, further revelation stopped for a period of time. The period of time during which there was a temporary cessation of revelation is termed as *fatrat-ul-wahy*. Towards the end of this period, an incident took place that is recounted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ thus:

While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. So I lifted my gaze towards the sky and saw the same angel who had come to me in the cave of Hira'. He was sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. So I was struck with awe until I fell down to the ground. Then, I went to my family and I said, زَمُونِي زَمُونِي "Wrap me up, wrap me up" So, they wrapped me up! Allah revealed the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. (Ṣaḥīḥain).

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this Sūrah as : -

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ (O you, enveloped in a mantle...74:1) The word *al-Muddaththir* is derived from *dithār* which refers to a 'thick, warm over-garment [such as a cloak or mantle] which a person wears in winter over his other clothes in order to protect himself from cold.' The form of address is affectionate and endearing as was explained under *Al-Muzzammil* in the preceding Sūrah. The two forms of address, *al-Muzzammil* and *al-Muddaththir*, are near-synonyms. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites a report from Jābir Ibn Zaid who says that *Al-Muddaththir* was revealed after *Al-Muzzammil*. Some scholars attribute this narration to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ as well. However, according to the narration previously reported from Ṣaḥīḥain, it is clear that the first Sūrah to be revealed [after the temporary cessation] was *Al-Muddaththir*. If *Al-Muzzammil* was revealed before this, Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ؓ [the narrator of the Ḥadīth] would have narrated it. Clearly, *Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddaththir*, are near-synonyms. Therefore, it is very likely that the two Sūrahs might have been revealed in connection with the same incident - when the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whilst walking, heard a voice from the sky and saw Jibra'īl Amīn ؑ sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth, and then went to the house and wrapped himself in a mantle. This at least confirms the point that the initial verses of the two Sūrahs were among the first verses to be revealed after the temporary break in the revelation. It is however not clear as to which set

of the verses was revealed first, and which was revealed subsequently. Authentic narratives confirm that the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra' were first to be revealed. *Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddaththir* were though revealed approximately the same time in connection with the same incident, there is a difference between the two: The injunctions given at the beginning of *Al-Muzzammil* are related to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ personal purification and perfection, and in *Al-Muddaththir* the injunctions are related to preaching, propagation and human reform.

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir lays down the following six injunctions:

Injunction [1]

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ (stand up and warn...74:2) 'Stand up' could be taken in its primary sense. It will mean: 'Remove the additional clothes in which you have wrapped yourself'. It is also not unlikely that 'stand up' means 'Prepare yourself for the onerous task of reforming the creation of Allah'. The command *fa-andhir* (and warn) comes from the infinitive *indhār* (warning) which is based on love and affection', such as a father's warning his children against the dangers of a snake, scorpion or fire. The Prophets proclaim the Divine Message and warn its rejecters of the evil consequences of rejection. Therefore, they have received the titles of *nadhīr* and *bashīr*. '*Nadhīr*' means 'the one who affectionately and endearingly warns [people] against harmful things' and '*Bashīr*' refers to 'the one who gives glad tidings'. The Qur'ān has conferred both the titles on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Book is replete with them. Here, however, the Qur'ān takes it as sufficient to mention *indhār* 'to warn' because at the time of revelation of this verse there were only a handful of Muslims. The rest of the people were all rejecters and disbelievers. They needed to be warned and did not merit glad tidings.

Injunction [2]

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ (..and pronounce the greatness of your Lord...74:3) It means: "Proclaim the greatness of your Lord both orally and practically. The attribute *rabb* (Lord) has been used in this context because it is itself the effective cause of the injunction, in that He is the Sustainer, Cherisher and Nourisher of the entire world. He alone is worthy of *Kibriyā'*. The word *takbīr* literally signifies 'to say *Allāhu Akbar*'. This includes *takbīr* of *taḥrīmāh* in the beginning of prayers and other *takbīrs* also. *Takbīr* is recited outside the prayers as well, such as in *adhān* and *iqāmāh*. There

is no indication in the Qur'an that this injunction specifically refers to uttering *Allāhu Akbar* to commence the prayers.

Injunction [3]

وَيَبَاكَ فَطَهِّرْ (and purify your clothes...74:4) The word *thiyāb* is the plural of *thaub*. In its primary sense, it refers to 'clothes or garment'. Metaphorically, the words *thaub* and *libās* at times refer to 'action, heart, soul, moral character and religion.' Man's body may also be referred to as '*libās*'. The Holy Qur'an and Arabic idioms bear ample testimony to this. Scholars of tafsir have taken all these senses into account when interpreting this verse. The variant interpretations may not be suspected of contradiction or conflict. The different interpretations attached to the verse enrich its significance. Thus the verse would signify that the body and clothes must be kept clean from all kinds of physical impurity. The heart and soul must be kept clean from false beliefs and adulterating thoughts, and free from base morals or from moral decadence. From this it is deducible that it is forbidden to trail the pants or loin-cloth below the ankle, because this is likely to pollute the garment. The injunction of cleansing the garment may signify that the garment must not be made or bought of unlawful money. It must not be made in such a way as the sacred law does not permit. Apparently, the injunction of cleansing the clothes is not specific to prayers. The injunction applies under all conditions. Thus the jurists have ruled that it is not permitted to keep the body and clothes unclean, without necessity, even outside prayers. Likewise, it is not permitted to sit in an unclean place. In times of necessity, it would be an exception. [Maḥzarī]. The Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

'...Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting, and loves those who keep themselves pure.[2:222]'

And according to a *ḥadīth* narrative 'Cleanliness is half the faith'. Therefore, a Muslim, under all conditions and circumstances, needs to keep his body, clothes and house clean and pure and also maintain his inner cleanliness of the heart. And Allah knows best!

Injunction [4]

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (...and keep away from filth...74:5). The letters 'RJZ' may be read as *rujz* or *rijz*, and in either case the word has the same significance.

Mujāhid, 'Ikramah, Qatādah, Zuhri, Ibn Zaid and other leading authorities of Tafsīr interpret the word *rujz* as 'idols' in this context. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, it signifies 'any sin'. The verse enjoins to give up idols or sins. Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ never indulged in idolatry at any time in his life, he is commanded, for emphasis, to abstain from it in future as he kept away from it in the past. This command is in actual fact directed to the idolaters, so that they may realise the importance of abstaining from idol-worship, as it enjoins the Holy Prophet ﷺ to shun all filth [idols and sins] despite being sinless and infallible.

Injunction [5]

وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْبِرُ (...and do no favour [to anyone merely] to ask more [in exchange]....74:6). In other words, no gift should be given to anyone seeking to get back in return more than what was given. This indicates that it is reprehensible to give to someone a gift with the intention that the person will give him a higher gift. Although it seems to be allowed, by another verse of the Qur'an, for common people, yet it is reprehensible and morally unrighteous - especially for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it is unlawful, as explained by Ibn 'Abbās ؓ.

Injunction [6]

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ (and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience.....74:7) The word *ṣabr* literally signifies 'to restrain oneself'. In the Qur'ānic context, the word has a very wide scope. It signifies to bind oneself to the laws of Allah, to restrain oneself from things made unlawful by Allah, and to control oneself, as far as possible, from unnecessary bewailing and complaining in times of difficulties and hardships. Thus this injunction is rather comprehensive which embraces almost the entire religion. On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is directed to observe patience, particularly because the earlier verses have directed him to invite the people towards the true faith and to avoid the infidelity and *shirk*. It is obvious that he will be opposed and persecuted by the forces of evil, as the result of his missionary efforts. He should, therefore, be ready to bear all opposition and persecution with patience and fortitude .

Having given these few injunctions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verses further refer to the Hereafter and its horrors. The word *nāqūr* means 'trumpet' and the verb *nuqira* means 'to blow into the trumpet so that it

makes a loud high sound'. After stating that the Day of Doom will be very horrible for all the infidels, a particular arrogant and conceited disbeliever has been described. He was a great mischief-maker and the gravity of his punishment will befit the enormity and gravity of his sins.

The Annual Income of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah: Ten Million Guineas

The disbeliever referred to here is Walīd Ibn Mughīrah. Allah had favoured him with abundant wealth, property and children. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, his land, property and gardens stretched from Makkah to Ṭā'if. According to Thaurī, his annual income was ten million Dinars. Some scholars have estimated less than this amount. It is, nonetheless, agreed that the income and yearly produce of his fields and gardens were available in every season, winter or summer. Thus the Qur'an says:

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا. وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا (and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes...74:12-13) He was recognised as the Arab leader. He was known among his fellow citizens by the title of *raiḥānah* (the Fragrance) of the *Quraish*. He himself used to boastfully refer to himself as Waḥīd Ibn-ul-Waḥīd 'Unique, the son of the Unique', meaning 'Neither I have any match in my nation, nor my father Mughīrah.'. [Qurṭubī]. But he was ungrateful to Allah for His favours. Despite accepting Qur'an as the Word of Allah, he imputed a lie to the Qur'an, calling it sorcery and calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ a sorcerer. Tafsīr of Qurṭubī recounts the story thus: When the following passage of the Qur'an was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting it:

حَمْدًا ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذُّنُوبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all) [3]. [40:1-3].

Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, hearing the recitation, exclaimed spontaneously, in which he was forced to concede as follows:

والله لقد سمعت منه كلاماً ما هو من كلام الانس ولا من كلام الجن وان له لحلاوة وان عليه لطاوة وان اعلاه لثمر وان اسفله لمغدق وانه ليعلو ولا يعلو

عليه وما يقول هذا بشر.

'By Allah! I have heard such a speech from him [Muḥammad] as can neither be the speech of a mortal, nor of Jinn. It has sweetness and elegance. Its upper part is fruit-bearing, and its lower part causes water to flow. Its beauty, no doubt, surpasses the beauty of all speeches, and cannot be superseded. It is not the speech of any human being.'

When the Quraish heard about what the great wealthy Arab leader had to say, it created a great convulsion in the Quraish, because it resulted in a wide inclination of the people towards Islam. This was a cause for concern for the leaders of the Quraish. They gathered and discussed (that if Walīd were to embrace the Islamic faith, the rest of the Quraish would soon follow suit.) Abū Jahl put their mind at ease when he took upon himself the responsibility of speaking to him and solving the problem.

Dialogue between Abū Jahl And Walīd: They Concur on the Holy Prophet's Veracity

Abū Jahl went to Walīd and sat next to him, pretending to be very sad. Walīd enquired, 'What is the matter? Why do you look so sad?' Abū Jahl made the reply, 'The Quraish decided to collect money for you and help you in your old age. Now they have learnt that you visit Muḥammad ﷺ and son of Abū Quḥāfah [ie Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ] so that you may have some eatables from them, and to this end you flatter them. You praise their speech. (Obviously, it was a lie that the Quraish was collecting money to help Walīd. The lie was invented merely to make him angry. Similarly it was also a lie that he was getting food from the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)' Walīd was highly enraged on hearing this. His anger knew no bounds and said in arrogance and conceit, 'How can the Quraish think this? I swear by Lāt and 'Uzzā [the two Arabian idols], I am not in need of their food. Do they not know that I am superior to them in abundance of wealth? However, when you say that Muḥammad ﷺ is insane, nobody would believe it. Did you ever see him perform any any act of insanity?' Abū Jahl replied لَا إِلَهَ 'Never, by God!' He said, 'You claim that Muḥammad ﷺ is a soothsayer. Did you hear him speak like a soothsayer?' Abū Jahl's reply was again in the negative. Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a poet. Did you hear him recite poetry?' When Abū Jahl declared that he had not, Walīd added, 'You say that he is a

liar. Did you ever heard him telling a lie? Abū Jahl was forced to concede that they had never heard him tell a lie. (In fact, they had conferred upon him the titles of *Aṣ-Ṣādiq* 'The Truthful' and *Al-'Amīn* 'The Honest'). Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a soothsayer. Have you then seen him uttering such words or doing such acts as the soothsayers are accustomed to? We know well the utterings of the soothsayers. Muḥammad's discourse cannot be held as the utterance of a soothsayer.' Abū Jahl again had to admit. 'No, by God!' Now Abū Jahl had to withdraw from all such false allegations, but he was wondering what he should say to the people about the Holy Prophet ﷺ to stop them from following him. So, he said to Walīd, "Then, you tell me what we should say about him?" Walīd started thinking, then he raised his eyes towards Abū Jahl, frowned in a hateful manner, and ultimately replied, 'I think he is certainly a magician'. He knew well that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a magician either. But in order to devise an excuse for saying so, he argued, 'Do you not see how his speech separates husband from wife, brother from brother and father from son? This is the magical effect of faith. As soon as a person embraces the faith, he begins to hate his unbelieving mother, father and other relatives.' The verses describe him thus:

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ. فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ نَظَرَ. ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ. ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ
وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ. فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ. إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ.

(He pondered and suggested. [18] Death unto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked [to those around him,] [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is nothing but saying of a mortal."...25)

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr*, and literally denotes 'to suggest'. The wretched Walīd was fully convinced of the veracity of the Messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but his anger got the better of him, and being vanquished by his arrogance and conceit, he had decided to oppose him. However, he wanted to abstain from lying openly, so that he might not be exposed to shame and disgrace. Therefore, he pondered very carefully, and suggested that he should be labelled a 'magician' on the grounds that his speech causes separation between father and son,

and between brothers, as it happens in the case of sorcery. He is therefore cursed repeatedly in the verses cited above.

Unbelievers Abstained from Telling Lies

When we analyse, it would appear very clearly that all unbelievers and transgressors were involved in committing all kinds of sins and shameful deeds, but they abstained from the enormity of telling lies. Abū Sufyān's statement in the royal court of Heraculus shows that the pagans were willing to sacrifice their lives and children in opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they were not willing to tell lies lest they are socially stigmatised as liars. Alas, in this so-called progressive world where everything moves retrogressively 'telling lies' is no sin. It is in fact treated as a great art. Let alone unbelievers, even the pious and religious Muslims do not find it hateful. They pride upon telling lies and getting others to tell lies. We seek Allah's refuge from such an attitude.

Children's Stay with the Father is a Great Boon

While mentioning the favours Allah had bestowed on Walīd, the Holy Qur'ān has said,

بَيْنَ شُهُودًا

'and sons present before (his) eyes, [13]'

This shows that just as the birth of children and their being alive are a boon of Allah, their staying with parents is also a great divine blessing, because it is the cause of coolness of their eyes and a satisfaction of their heart. Additionally, abiding in their presence, children can be of assistance to the parents in their service and businesses. But the progress which this retrogressive age is making is based on gold and silver currencies. Comfort and peace are founded on promissory notes. Parents throw away their children in foreign countries. They are happy at their children's staying overseas for years, and it does not matter if they do not see their faces all their lives as long as they receive news of their huge earnings and salaries or income, enabling them to express their superiority to their family members. This indicates that they are unaware of the concept of peace and comfort. This should be the result of forgetting Allah as the Qur'ān says:

نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

'...those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own

selves__[59:19]'

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ (...And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He ... 74:31) Muqātil, among the leading authorities, says that this is rebuttal to Abū Jahl's statement. When he heard this verse which says that there are nineteen angels in charge of Hell, he addressed the youth of Quraish and said that Muḥammad ﷺ has only nineteen companions, so there is nothing to worry about. Baihaqī records a narrative from Suddi that when verse 30 was revealed, a foolish Quraishi unbeliever, Abūl-Asalāin by name, spoke out: 'O nation of Quraish, I alone am sufficient for the nineteen. I will take care of ten with my right arm, and nine with my left arm. Thus I will put an end to all nineteen of them.' On this occasion, this verse was revealed. 'O fools, first of all one angel is sufficient for all. Moreover, the number nineteen refers to the chiefs of angels. Under each of these angels, the number of Allah's angels is legion beyond human count or computation. Allah alone knows their number. They are ready at hand to carry out the punishment to the unbelievers and transgressors.'

In the next verses, there is the mention of the Hereafter and its horrors.

إِنَّهَا لَاحْذَى الْكُبْرِ (it (saqar: Hell) is one of the greatest things....74:35) The pronoun in the phrase *innahā* refers to *saqar* 'Hell' which has been mentioned in one of the preceding verses. The word *kubar* is the plural of *kubrā* which is an adjective for *dāhiyah* or *muṣībah* 'calamity'. The verse purports to say that Hell which the unbelievers will enter will be one of the greatest calamities. Besides, there will be many different kinds of torments and tortures.

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ (to the one who wishes to come forward [towards good deeds] or to go back [from them]...74:37) In this context, 'to come forward' signifies 'coming forward towards faith and obedience' and *ta'akhhur* 'to go backward' signifies 'moving away from faith and obedience'. The verse purports to warn against the torment and torture of the Hellfire. This applies to all human beings in general. Some accept the warning and are guided by the truth, and the unfortunate ones hold back from accepting the warning, turn away from it and reject it.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ (Everyone will be detained [in the

Hell] because of what he did, [38] except the People of the Right, [i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands].....74:38-39) The word *rahīnah* is used in the sense of *marhūnah* 'will be detained'. The word is derived from *rahn* 'to give something valuable to a pawnbroker as a security for a debt. The valuable thing is thus merely detained by the pawnbroker. He cannot use it or take advantage of it'. Likewise, every person on the Day of Judgement will be detained in lieu of his sins, except those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands. In this context, 'detention' could refer to being detained in Hell. In this case, the statement would mean that every person will be held in pledge in Hell against his sins to receive punishment, except the People of the Right. The context indicates that the People of the Right are those who have repaid their debt, i.e. they have fulfilled their obligations in this world towards Allah and other human beings. In these instances there is no need for them to be detained. This interpretation seems to be plain, simple and straightforward. However, if 'detention' refers to being held at some other place before giving account or before admission into Paradise or Hell, it signifies that every person will be held to give an account of his deeds. No person will be permitted to move out unless the account is taken. In this case, the exception of the People of the Right could refer to the sinless who are not accountable, such as minors or immature children as explained by Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام. According to a Tradition, a segment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ community would be exempted from accountability. They will enter Paradise without having to account for actions. Possibly, it could be referring to this segment. According to Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah, there will be three categories of people on the Plain of Gathering: [1] *sābiqūn* 'the Foremost' and *muqarrabūn* 'who have attained nearness to Allah'; [2] the People of the Right; and [3] the People of the Left. On this occasion, the *muqarrabūn* have been merged with 'the People of the Right', and only the latter people have been mentioned. From this point of view, there is no express text which states that all the People of the Right will be excepted, and will not be detained for accountability. The first interpretation, that is being held in Hell, appropriately fits the context. And Allah knows best!

فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ (Then intercession of intercessors will not avail

them...74:48) The attached pronoun of *tanfa'uhum* refers to those sinners who have been mentioned in the preceding verses. They confessed to four crimes: [1] they did not perform obligatory prayers; [2] they did not feed the poor, that is, they did not spend on the necessities of the poor; [3] they indulged (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged in opposing Islam or committing sins and shameful deeds; and [4] they denied the Day of Requit.

This verse purports to say that whoever has these characteristics, including denial of the Day of Requit, is an infidel. The intercession of anyone who tries to intercede for an infidel will be of no benefit to him on the Day of Judgement. Even if all the intercessors join forces to intercede, it will not help. This is because intercession is only useful if the conditions for it are met. Therefore, the verse uses the plural expression, thus:

شفاعة الشافعين

'intercession of intercessors'

No Intercession will Benefit an Unbeliever, but will Benefit a Believer

It is deducible from the verse under comment that, besides infidels, all Muslims, even though they may be sinners, will benefit from intercession as many authentic *aḥādīth* bear ample testimony to this. The intercessors will be the Prophets of Allah, Allah's friends and righteous personalities. It is confirmed that the general body of believers will intercede for one another, and their intercession will be accepted.

A Special Note

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrates that Allah's angels and Prophets, the martyrs and the righteous will intercede for sinners in the Hereafter, and they will be delivered from Hell by virtue of their intercession, except the four types of sinners who have been classified above, that is, those who failed to perform their obligatory prayer and to pay their Zakāh, those who opposed Islam with the opponents of Islam and denied the Hereafter. This shows that intercession will not be accepted for those who fail to perform their obligatory Ṣalāh and pay their Zakāh. However, other narratives indicate that the correct view with regard to the verse under comment is that the unacceptability of

intercession refers to those sinners who commit the four types of crimes that include the rejection of the Hereafter. Besides the rejection, it is not necessary that sinners committing other sins should be punished in the same way. However, there are other *Ḥadīth* narratives that refer to certain major sins which deprive people of intercession. For instance, if a person denies the veracity of intercession, or if he denies the existence of the Pond of Kauthar, he will have no share in either of the two.

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ (So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder...74:49)

The word *tadhkirah* (Reminder), in this context, refers to the Holy Qur'ān, because the word literally signifies a 'reminder or something that reminds'. The Qur'ān is unique in reminding Allah's attributes of perfection, His mercy and wrath, and the reward and punishment. Towards the end, the verse 54 has explained that the 'Reminder' is the Holy Qur'ān that is rejected by them. The allergy of the infidels against the Holy Qur'ān has been mentioned in verses 50 and 51 in the following words, *كَانَهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ. فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ* "as if they were wild donkeys, fleeing from a lion?" The word *qaswarah* used in verse 51 has two meanings: [1] a 'lion'; and [2] an 'archer' or a 'hunter'. Both meanings have been reported from the noble Companions.

هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ (...He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive... 74:56) Allah is 'Ahl-ut-taqwā' in the sense that 'He alone is worthy to be feared and entitled to be obeyed'. *Ahl-ul-Maghfirah* signifies that 'He alone is the Being Who forgives the sins of even the greatest sinners whenever He so wishes': No one else has the power to do this .

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Muddaththir
Ends here